Concerning God's seeking out

HIS

ISRAEL,

Likewise Concerning the Principle

OF

LIEF.

VVhereby he seeketh them and the way of their closing with His Spirit therein.

As also Concerning the two

COVENANTS,

UNDER

One whereof he pleaseth to exercise and prepare them for the life and inheritance, which he hath treasured up for them in the other.

WITH

A Postscript relating some things necessary for lost man to be acquainted with in his travels from his lost Estate.

By *Isaac Penington.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

To such in *Godmanchester* and thereabouts, who bear the reproachful name of Quakers, whose religion began in the power, and who still abide and walk on in the power waiting to be perfected in the full manifestation and appearance thereof.

Dear friends in Gods pure Eternal truth,

IT was my lot once to be among you in a meeting, together with I. C. *where I had a word unto you from the Lord, while* I. C. *was declareing. But being exceedingly bowed down in spirit, and afraid to interrupt the service in him (whom I looked upon as far more abundantly grown up in the life, and fitter to Minister from the life) I waited till the life in him should stop. But then those words which had often sprung in me before, sprung not again; and I durst not then speak them from a bare remembrance of them, not finding the spirit of the Lord then giving them me to speak. So I went away with a burthen on my own soul, and also with a sense of some lose to you of some part of the good, which the Lord intended you. Since that time, I have often remembred the thing with grief, crying to the Lord that, that which hath so often stopped the life in me, and my service in the life, might in his good time be removed; and that the day might come, wherein the man might never more be or appear, as of himself, or as a determiner concerning the things which flow from the life, but that the life might have its free course and current through me, in its own pure streamings, to the delighting of my own heart in the Lord, and the refreshing of others. And indeed this day I exceedingly long for, that nothing of self might be left to be brought forth, and that all which is of the life might spring up and flourish, both in me and every where.*

Now one morning, as my heart was breathing towards the Lord, not having a thought either of you or this thing, the very same words (which were given me in that meeting) sprang up again livingly in me, with a pointing to write them down, with what he Lord should please to give in further, and send them to you, toge-

ther with a Paper which was a little before written concerning the two Covenants. And when I had almoſt finiſhed what was then given me to write, I was further directed to annex to the firſt paper, another concerning the principle. How the Lord ſhall pleaſe to improve them to your advantage or to the advantage of any others, I leave to him, it being the earneſt deſire of my heart, that his work may proſper in his hand, and that the light and power which iſſueth forth from him for the ſalvation of ſouls may be effectual thereunto; and that nothing of love, of mercy, of goodneſs, of life, of Salvation, of his ſearching and healing vertue may be held back by him, which the ſtate or condition of any of his ſheep or lambs (whether loſt or gathered) calleth for: that his Iſrael *may become the glory of the earth and all* Nations *may be refreſhed with beholding the beauty and taſting the ſweetneſs of life and righteouſneſs, which ſhall aſſuredly flow forth from his ſanctuary. And ſurely the time is not far off (whatever the eye of ſence may judge, and however things may appear to mans underſtanding) wherein* Iſrael *ſhall be no more compelled to worſhip in the Temples of mens building and dedicating but ſhall in the beauty of holineſs for the day is come (yea the bleſſed day is come) wherein the Lord God of life will build up his* Sion, *and appear there in his glory Amen, hallelujah.*

Concerning

Concerning God's ſeeking out his Israel.

THis is the word, which was given to me; *THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL IS SEEKING OUT HIS SHEEP, EVEN THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL*: Concerning which, theſe three Queſtions ſprang up in me one after another, as I was about to write and writing.

Queſt. 1. *Who are his ſheep.*

Anſw. His ſheep are the ſons of men; the loſt ſheep of the houſe of *Iſrael* are thoſe among the ſons of men, who have felt touches of his life, begettings into his nature, and were in ſome meaſure gathered into ſome appearance and diſpenſation of his life by his holy ſpirit, wherein they felt warmth from God in their ſpirits, and a delight and joy in what they felt, and a longing after a further manifeſtation of him. Theſe were his ſheep, in a gathered eſtate in ſome degree, by thoſe diſpenſations of life in the darkneſs, which had ſome ſtrength in them to gather from under the darkneſs, and did gather into that meaſure of light and life, that was then diſpenſed. But the ſheep cleaving to the diſpenſations (which were very weak and imperfect, and had little of ſpirit, but very much of fleſh in them) and not following the Lamb out of them into the further diſpenſations of life, into which he ſtood ready to lead, the Lord brake them in pieces, departed from them, and left the life to be made a prey of and brought under the captivity of death: ſo that the ſheep were ſcattered upon the mountains and every beaſt of prey was ready to faſten his teeth on them and devour them. O the precious buddings forth of the virtue and power of God, that was to be found in ſeveral ſorts of profeſſors, while they ſought the Lord only, and the knowledge of one another in the breathing ſpirit, and minded not the outward form, but the feeling of life in their duties and ordinances!

But when they began to mind the form, and cry up ſeveral forms; the Lord alſo began to loath the forms, and did not give forth that among them, which formerly they met with, but took away the kernel and left them the ſhel: And oh how dry and barren have they become ſince! Where is the feeling of life? where is the love to one another in the living ſence? Where is the zeal after and earneſt ſeeking of the power of Religion? where is the nature of the ſheep to be found in them? and where is the preſence of the ſhepherd among them? Are they not *loſt ſheep* indeed loſt to God? loſt to themſelves? have they not loſt the *holy, pure, ſweet, meek, heavenly, tender, gentle nature of the ſheep*? have they not loſt the *paſture and the fold*, whereon they were wont to feed and wherein they were wont to lie down ſafe? have they not loſt the *preſerver of their ſouls* from the devouring ſpirit? nay, have they not loſt the very *ſeed of life*, which the good husbandman did ſow in them? And do not evil ſeeds ſhoot up in the ſtead thereof, to the poiſoning of their hearts and blemiſhing of their converſations? And are not ſome of them inſencible of their loſe, and lie ſtill drowned in their forms, thinking to confine the appearance of the free life and unlimited ſpirit there? others of them ſick, and deeply wounded and languiſhing, not knowing where to meet with the good ſhepherd, nor how to make ſhift without him? O the cryes of the deſolate and mourning ſouls, which love God at their hearts and have the relicks of his Nature left in them in a ſeed ſtill, which he once begot and brought forth in ſome freſhneſs! Oh their deep anguiſh, their miſerable loſt condition for want of meeting with the Phiſitian, their pantings, their teares, their diſtreſſes, their roarings out, their over-whelmings, their ſeveral kinds of Captivities, and the cruelties exerciſed upon their ſpirits by the Captiver even break my heart, that I am almoſt overwhelmed in the ſence of their miſery. But my heart is ſomewhat comforted with the freſhneſs of this teſtimony, which hath often riſen up in the immediate life of God in my heart, and I have heard his voice ſpeaking it, even that *he will ſeek them out.* And I know he hath

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the skill to finde them, in their ſeveral mourning holes, wherein they lye hid; and the pits where into they are tumbled; and the Bryars and Thorns of the wilderneſs, wherewith they are torn, and wherein they are twiſted and entangled, and held pining to death; and in the priſons, and Chains, and Fetters of their Spirits, wherein they are cloſed up and bound down by the Enemy of their Souls.

Queſt. 2. *How will he ſeek them, and how will he find them out?*

Anſw. By the light of his ſpirit ſhining in their hearts, by which he will touch and quicken the Sheep's life, and open the Sheeps eare and perſwade the heart to know and believe that it is he, that viſiteth in his tender mercy, and that he will have mercy on and ſhew compaſſion to that, which hath long been caſt off and forſaken; and that he will be their God, and they ſhall be his people, even the Houſe of *Iſrael* that had departed from him: and that he had not forgotten them, but waited for the hour of mercy, and for the ſeaſon of the bringing forth of that life and power, whoſe ſearching and healing vertue will reach to the utmoſt extreamity of their conditions.

Queſt. 3. *What will he do with them, when he hath ſought after and found them out?*

Anſw. He will gather them into the fold of life, and lead them into the paſtures of life, and feed them with the food of life, as their conditions are able to bear; he will be fitting them by the exerciſes of his ſpirit, for their paſſages from death to life, and as they are capable, ſo he will be ſtill tranſlating them from the one into the other. He will bring them from their ſeveral falſ-built ſtates in the Land of *Egypt* (or *Babylon*) into a true wilderneſs ſtate: and there, as he wears out the old nature in them, ſo will he ſpeake comfortably to them and build up the new, and nouriſh the true Iſraelitiſh Babe there with *Manna* from Heaven; and after he is grown up to a mans Eſtate, and hath received the inward Circumciſion, lead him into the pleaſant land, where there are the rich paſtures, & the ſweet ſtill Waters, and the precious Milk and Hony of the living, with which the

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land flows naturally, and which yeilds pure nouriſhment to all the living Off-ſpring. O my heart is not able to contain the ſence of all that God will do for *Iſrael*, or of what he will be to them, or of what they ſhall be to him, when he hath finiſhed his work upon them, and brought them forth (through the ſtrength of his Covenant) in the Nature and into the poſſeſſion of his life.

But ſure I am he hath begun his work, the light of the day (even of the everlaſting day) hath ſprung and viſited many, the Principle of Life hath been revealed in the hearts of many, and many are gathering into it, and finde the man ſinking and dying, and the life riſing and living in them day by day. And though the paſſage be bitter, and the Paſſover ſtill eaten with bitter hearbs, and the devourer often let looſe and ſuffered to nip and deſtroy, yet out of the Eater at laſt comes forth meat, and out of the ſtrong one in the iſſue comes forth ſweetneſs. Yea, though there be no faith found to cloſe in with the light, nor any ſtrength left to obey or follow, becauſe of the deep foregoing breakings (wherein both nature and ſpirit were all daſhed in peices, and ſwallowed up in confuſion) yet the breath of life and the power of the light (in proceſs of excerciſes, and after much deep miſery, and impoſſibilities, to the ſight and judgment of ſenſe) at length raiſeth up a little ſeed in the longing Soul, which receiveth and bringeth forth after an hidden way that, which it could not. And here life is indeed of Grace and wholly of the Seed, in this ſtate. Only waite to learn and know in Spirit (and then take heed of diſpiſing) the weak beginnings and dawnings of light, in the ſecret ſtirrings and movings of the principle of life: and waite alſo for a watch to be ſet up in thee againſt that fleſhly wiſdome and underſtanding, which will be apt to be judging about the work of God in thy heart; for if it prevaile ſo far, it will then alſo be begetting in thee diſpiſings of and turnings from the low beginnings thereof, and ſo divert thy feet from the path of life. For the prevention whereof, and for the furtherance of thy Soul, in its cloſing with and travelling on in the light and guidance of the Spirit of the Lord this following Paper is added. *Concerning*

Concerning the Seed or inward Principle, whereby life is begotten and maintained in the heart.

THe Lord God, who is full of everlasting Bowels of compassion towards mankind in general, but more especially towards those, in whom he hath begotten a sence of the want of him, with breathings and desires after him, hath chosen a Seed or inward Principle of Life to appear in, towards the breaking the bonds of their Captivity, and the bringing them from under the power and misery of death.

This, many who have been overwhelmed with misery, and whose spirits have melted and failed with the want of the sence of their God, and have felt that life, which was formerly built up in them, broken down and laid wast, and their communion with God swallowed up in the ruines thereof, and their Souls ready utterly to perish and be devoured by the Enemy every moment; after the cutting off of their hopes, and the shutting up of their eyes towards all ways of releif, I say, after all this and much more than can be expressed, in the tender mercy of the Lord, have they felt this principle revealed in their hearts, and their hearts by degrees through the skill and same mercy of the Lord, which revealed the principle (and not from any worthiness, or faith and obedience of theirs: for that was as freely given and preserved, as the principle it self was revealed) gathered into the principle, where the Life reigns, and where the strength and Dominion of death is broken in all those, who by the allurings and guidings of the Spirit of the Lord are led thither.

Now the main thing necessary towards the Redemption of the Soul is, after the revealing of this principle, and some sence and feeling of it, and the turning of the minde towards it, to wait to be made more and more acquainted with it, that in the stirrings, movings and leadings thereof, there be a ready giving

up to be gathered into it, and to be guided by it.

For though this principle be all life, yet it is at first but as a seed, and the appearance of the Lord in it, is but as in a Seed, very little, low, weak, hard to be discerned, eatie to be over-looked and despised, and some greater and more undeniable appearance expected. Yet that is not the way, but the Soul must become subject unto and lowed under this little appearance: and so as the Seed gets advantage and grows bigger and larger in thy heart, the appearance of the Lord will be greater and fuller there. But to look for the greater appearance, before the Seed be owned and received in its lesser appearance (and the Vessel thereby fitted for the greater appearance) is not the way of God, but the deceit of the Enemy, whereby he would destroy the Soul, and cut it off from the Lord for ever; which he certainly will do, if he can keep the seed from growing there, and the Soul from joyning with and growing into it.

Therefore watch to feel the savour of life in thy heart day by day, and therein to feel leadings, and drawings from the life, suitable to thy state: for in this savour, and in these drawings rises the true light, vvhich leads into the way of life. And then watch against the reasonings, and disputations which the Enemy will raise in thy minde, who will strive to make thee a Judge over these drawings; whereas the Light, which ariseth in the savour and in the drawings, is thy King (though in this low appearance) and not to be judged by thy minde, thoughts and reasonings, but to judge them all down, and be bowed unto and obeyed by thee. And consider, in the weight of thy spirit, art thou (in thy darkness and with thy earthly minde) fit to be a Judge concerning the Light which ariseth in thee? or rather is not the Light, in its lowest and weakest appearance, appointed and fitted by the Lord to judge thee, and make thee bow down in fear and trembling before it; and thy crown (thou in thy highest exaltation) is to be cast at the lowest footstept thereof: And then it will in some measure, thou lying at the foot thereof and bowing in Spirit before it, enter into thee, and

and enlighten and quicken thee. But in thy being wise about it, or taking upon thee to judge concerning it, it will stand at a distance from thee, and leave thee in thy darkness and Captivity.

Therefore consider where thou art, and breath unto the Lord to reveal that unto thee, which is proper for thee at present, and to bow thy spirit under his present will and manifestation to thee.

And be content to be little and low, and to receive little and low instructions from God, and to walk in the path of brokenness and humility before the Lord: for this is his way of fitting for, and advancing into the high and glorious power of his life. And this my Soul is assured of, that none shall enter into or abide in his Kingdome, but as they become little, poor and naked, and as they are led by the little child of God's begetting, who not at all answers the wisdome of man and his expectations, but still confounds them, and leads on in such a path, as if the eye of man's wisdome be open, it will still be crying out, it can never bring to life. Yet that which disputeth not, but beleiveth, at seasons feels a progress, and that the growth of life had advantage in the heart by those very things, which at present seemed to give death the advantage.

Therefore watch against thy understanding, and all the workings thereof, as ever thou desirest life: for it will still betray thee, and either keep thee from the way, or turn thee out of the way, when ever thou hearkenest to it. And mark this, That which God sowes and brings up in thee is a sensible plant, not a knowing mind; and thy right judgement is only in the sensibleness of that Plant, and not in the understanding or comprehension of thy minde: yea that sensible Plant (which thy wisdome will be very apt to despise and perk over) must batter down and bring to nothing thy understanding, and grow up in the stead of it, if ever thy Soul be made an habitation for the Life. Therefore sink into the feeling, and dwell in the feeling, and wait for the savour of the Principle of Life, and the touches and drawings

of the ſavour, and walk along in it towards the land of Life, parting with all, and leaving behind thee, whatever the ſavoury of life diſreliſheth, and entring into and taking up whatever the ſavour of the Life reliſheth, that thou mayeſt be prepared for the Lord, and for the glorious appearances of his ſpirit in thee.

And as thou art led into this, and becomeſt ſubject to this; ſo thou wilt taſte the Lord, and feel the ſweetneſs of his Ointment, and the peace of his nature, and the joy of the beginnings of his Kingdom in thy heart, and the blotting out of thy iniquities for his own names ſake. For though the Enemy may lay load upon thee, and fill thee as much as he can with his filth, and lay it cloſe to thy charge, inſomuch as thou art not able to acquit thy ſelf at all, but art as ready to charge thy ſelf therewith, as the Enemy is to charge thee: yet the Lord conſidereth the Seed he hath ſown in thee, and the deſire which he hath wrought in thy heart to be joyned thereunto; and he knoweth whence the ſtirring of this mind is, and how weak thou art in this hour of thy darkneſs and Captivity; and the intent of his heart is to deliver thee from all this, and not to condemn thee for it.

But oh take heed of limmitting the Lord to give forth ſo clear a Light, as the natural underſtanding will be judging neceſſary: but be content with the Light which ariſeth in the ſavour, and ſhineth inwardly to thy ſpirit in the drawing, and be ſubject and bowed under the Light of the drawing, though never ſo much againſt the Light of the creaturely underſtanding and the reaſonings thereof.

Clearneſs of Light is a ſtate, which is to be grown up into: but before thou comeſt to this, thy underſtanding muſt be darkened, confounded and brought to nothing; and thou canſt not have ſuch a clearneſs there, while it is confounding. There is indeed a true clearneſs in the Principle of Life (proportionable to its ſtate and growth) even then: but the reaſonings of thy dark minde will be continually overclouding and overbearing it (as if it were darkneſs, and not the Light) & will prevail, unleſs thou

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be kept in the favour, and ſuffer not thy underſtanding to judge, but keep it under the judgement of the favour. Mark therefore heedfully this which follows,

The firſt work of the Lord is to confound the knowledge and underſtanding of the creature, eſpecially in thoſe, who have been deep in wiſdome and experience of things: for if they were not cloſely purſued with darkneſs and confuſion, they would preſently be gathering a ſtock into the old ſtore-houſe again, and ſo grow wiſe after the fleſh, and never learn the Life of the Spirit. Now in this work of confounding, how can the leadings of God's ſpirit be manifeſt and clear after the fleſh, and to the fleſhly underſtanding? yea, if they were manifeſt after this manner, how were it poſſible to withhold the fleſhly part from drinking them in, and ſo the man would live again, but the Seed not live, which gains its life (and being, and form and perfection) in the man, by the death of the man: even by the man's being hunted, and battered, and broken out of his wiſdome, and knowledge, and reaſoning, and comprehenſion; and becoming as a fool or child, being able to know nothing, nor retain nothing, nor performe nothing, nor keep his ſtanding, but ſtill as he is led, and taught, and created, and preſerved in the power and by the preſence of the Life.

Concerning the two Covenants.

WHat *is the Covenant of the Law?* Doth it not contain and hold forth Eternal Life to man, upon his faith in an obedience to the ſpirit of God?

What is the Covenant of the Goſpel? Doth it not contain the promiſe to the Seed, and Life to man through the Seed, and forgiveneſs of his ſins for the Seed ſake, and the uniting of his heart to and preſerving it in the Seed through the grace, as alſo repentance, faith and obedience from the grace?

Mark then the difference between the two Covenants. The

Covenant of the Law is all of works and according to works, yea even the faith that is there found (which is begotten and brought forth in man by vertue of that Covenant) is of the man or of the working Principle. The Covenant of the Gospel is all of grace; and the very works that are there found, are from the grace, and the Seed bestowed and conveyed by Promise.

Now mark, The Seed (or standing Principle of Life) in both Covenants is the same. It is the same Christ by which *Adam* stood before the fall, and which was the promised Seed after the fall. The light of both the Covenants is the same, even the eternal Light of the Spirit. The Life and power is the same, even the life and power of the Spirit. The end or mark, at which man aims, and towards which he travels in both is the same, even the land of rest and peace in the Spirit of the Father, who begets a living soul under both Covenants. But the tearms of the Covenants, and the manner of dispensing them are different; and the wombs, whereof the children of each Covenant are born, are different likewise, the one being the working Nature (which also came from God, and hath its blessing from him in its obedience and subjection to him) the other the womb of grace, which brings forth the Child of grace in man according to and by vertue of the promise; and doth not finde a will in the day of man's choice and liberty, but createth a will in the day of God's powerful appearance in it.

Yet this Seed of promise, or this new man begotten by the Seed of Life according to the promise, must walk through the Law, and travel through all the dark paths of that Covenant, before it come to inherit the promised Land; where the rigor of the Law and weakness of the flesh will be throughly felt, and many transgressions and many stripes, yea many Captivities and cuttings off from the life may be felt also: yea the Seed of the first Covenant may live and flourish, and injoy and boast much

much of God; while this Seed is miſerable. But when this womb is viſited with the ſtrength of grace, and free power of Life, and bringeth forth her children therein; and no more is called for from the working part of man, but all brought forth in the free, full and freſh power of Life; then ſhall the Seed of *Iſrael* after the promiſe, become an everlaſting habitation for, and a perfect joy in the Life.

Therefore diſtinguiſh in ſpirit between the Law and Grace, and the Covenants of each, and the diſpenſations of each, and how they are mixed and intermingled, both towards man and towards the Seed, in the ſeveral diſpenſations in which each are brought forth. For there hath been no perfect Covenant brought forth, either of Works or of Grace (in a way of publick adminiſtration) ſince the fall of *Adam*. Had there been a perfect Covenant of works, there had been no capacity of ſalvation thereby to fallen man. Had there been a perfect Covenant of grace there had been no poſſibility or capacity of deſtruction: for grace in its perfect going forth, cannot but overcome and ſave the man. But God ordereth both theſe Covenants, both towards the man and towards the Seed, according to the ſtate of the man and the ſtate of the Seed, and according to what (in his eternal wiſdome) he judgeth meet to work upon them thereby.

Man being fallen, and having loſt his ſtrength of Faith and obedience in and to the requirings of Gods Spirit, the viſitation of him is now by grace, and not meerly to call forth what is left in him, but to help him with light and power, and by the influences of the grace and of the power to quicken him towards God. Yet man in the receiving of this, is apt to over-look the grace, and attribute too much to his own ſtrength, thinking himſelf ſomewhat becauſe of the grace and power which hath viſited him, and new refreſhed the

the ſtrength and nature of his principle in him again. Hereby he is apt to fix his ſtanding on his obedience to the Spirit or appearance of the grace, and ſo in effect builds his life and hopes again on his own principle, or on a new-received power, as held or kept to by him (which he may fall from now, as well as he did at firſt) and not on the free begetting and free preſerving of a principle of life in him.

This viſitation of grace is to all mankinde, there being none upon earth, whom the Lord doth not thus ſeek and viſit with the light of his eternal life, thus adminiſtred through the grace: which ſo far as they fall in with, the Lord doth receive them and beget life in them, engrafting them into the living Vine, and preſerving them according to their abiding in it, and according to their obedience to him in the ſpringings up of the ſap of the Vine in them.

But beſides this common adminiſtration of the grace to all mankinde, God formerly picked out a people after the fleſh of *Abraham*, and afterwards a people after the ſpirit of *Abraham*, towards whom in a more peculiar way his grace did adminiſter it ſelf, and whom he dealt with, *not as with other Nations*, but choſe to love and work up into life and communion with himſelf, by a more eſpecial adminiſtration and viſitation of his love and grace. The one of theſe were that people of the *Jews*, the other the believing *Chriſtians*.

With the *Jews* he remeunbred the Covenant with *Abraham*. By vertue of that he loved and choſe them to be his people after the fleſh, (or his outward people) by vertue of that he brought them out of *Egypt*, led them through the Wilderneſs, brought them into *Canaan*, giving them an inheritance therein, and delivering them from their Enemies time after time.

Yet he alſo made another Covenant with them (even that of the Law) which was ſuitable to their ſtate, and which their nature deſired, and choſe to walk with God in, but hardly ever kept it, and ſo brought the curſe and miſery due thereby upon their heads, and at laſt were utterly cut off, ſo far and ſo long as the

Lord

Lord pleaſeth to let the curſe of that Covenant have power over them, untill he ſhall pleaſe again to remember to them his Covenant with *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, and breath life through it into their *dry bones*.

Now though God did make this Covenant with them, becauſe they were fleſhly, and their preſent ſtate required it; yet he did not diſanul or make void the other to them, all the while their day laſted; but remembred loving-kindneſs and mercy towards them in it, often delivering and redeeming them for his own Names ſake, pointing them alſo to the *word in the heart* and the gracious adminiſtration thereof: But they were blinded and held captive in the earthly nature and principle, and in the Law thereof, and held their marriage and union with God thereby. And ſo, though this adminiſtration to the *Jews* (wherein God did ſtrive with them by his Spirit, and ſometimes ſtir life and beget a true ſenſibleneſs in many of them, calling to them for the circumciſion of the heart, and pointing them to the principle of life in the heart, whereby it might be circumciſed) though this advanced them far above the Heathen; yet they through the fleſh and the letter, at laſt fell below the very ſtate of the Heathen, proving greater enemies to and perſecuters of the life than they. And ſo the Lord brake them off from the Olive tree into which they were engraffed, and cut them off from the Covenant which he had made with *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, whereas hitherto (though he had been often provoked by, and ſorely offended with them, yet) he had ſtill loved them *for the Fathers ſake*.

After them and in their ſtead he choſe the believing *Gentiles*, engraffing them into the ſtock from whence theſe were broken, letting them into a ſweeter, and fuller, and more ſpiritual and abiding eſtate and influences of the Covenant. For here the life was manifeſted, and the light did ſhine in great beauty and clearneſs, and they were gathered into the true Fold of the Shepherd (beſides that outward ſtate, which was alſo built up by the Lord and preſerved for a ſeaſon among them:) and they

 ſaw

ſaw their ſtanding to be by and in the grace, and were eſtabliſhed in the grace, and could feel the good pleaſure calling, the good pleaſure working, the good pleaſure being and doing all in them, and could cry *grace, grace* to this building and ſay, *Not for any works that they had wrought*, or for their faith in or, obedience to the light of life, which was made manifeſt; *but of his own mercy he ſaved them*, who wrought in them both the will and the deed of his own good pleaſure, and preſerved them by his power through faith (which was of his gift and begetting) unto ſalvation.

Yet for all this, there was ſomewhat of the Law or light eternal to be adminiſtred unto them, which was ſuitable to the natural part or firſt principle, through which they were to travel, even until the man or firſt nature was wholly waſted; whereby ſome of them were in danger of falling away wholly, others of coming under chaſtizement and judgement, with which the Lord purſued them, that they might not be utterly condemned with the world. Mark therefore this brief ſum of the matter.

1. Man fell under the firſt Covenant. His reſtitution is never to be thereby, but by the ſecond; through which God works up veſſels into a ſtate of life and glory in the adminiſtration of his grace.

2. But in this working up of the veſſel, he ſees neceſſary to make uſe of the other Covenant, according to the capacity that is left in man to anſwer it: and ſo as that capacity wears out, the Covenant of the Law waſteth and paſſeth away by degrees, and the Covenant of grace ſucceeds and fills up the room thereof.

3. There is great danger of falling from the life for ſome, as alſo of chaſtizements and judgements to others, while this capacity remains, even while the earthly nature, ſpirit and principle is not worn out by the entrance, death and reſurrection of the principle of life in the heart.

4. When the firſt principle is wholly dead, and the heart perfectly formed in the life, and all perfectly raiſed and renewed in

in the life; then there is no danger of falling or fear of chaſtizement; but perfect life, and peace and joy with God in his ſpirit of power and glory for ever more.

5. Though God begin with man in a Covenant of grace, and bring in a Covenant of the Law to man (ſuitable to his preſent ſtate) only in ſubſerviency to the Covenant of grace; and would not have man ſtick there, but cling to him in the grace, and ſeek remiſſion through the grace for his own names ſake: Yet man through the prevalency of the firſt principle in him (and his looking on God through that) is apt to fix on this Covenant, and draw comfort or diſcouragement to himſelf from his own obedience or failings, and not live on the freeneſs of Gods love, and the faithfulneſs of his heart to the ſoul to all conditions, for his Chriſt's ſake.

This hath been the great error of *Iſrael* (even of *Iſrael* after the fleſh, and of *Iſrael* after the Spirit alſo) that while God layes hold on them by his love, promiſe, mercy and grace; yet they lay hold on him by another Covenant, even their obedience to the Laws he gives forth: not knowing, that the obedience to the firſt Covenant muſt be a fruit of the ſecond; and that they are not beloved or accepted for that, but that that flowes into them and is brought forth in them, through the love, and through the free and powerful workings thereof in them. I ſay, This (to wit, their obedience) is not the ground of their acceptance or being loved, ſo far as they are in this Covenant: though as far as the other hath yet an influence, it hath ſome force in this reſpect. But this the eye is to paſſe through, and to be be fixed on the other Covenant, ſtill waiting for the revealing and manifeſting the riches of the mercy thereof, and to feel the waſhing and cleanſing thereof from all the guilt, which under the remainers of the firſt Covenant will be daily contracting, while any thing of the earthly principle and offending part is left ſtanding.

There hath been in this day, a very glorious adminiſtration of life to the ſons of men (after the long foregoing night)

wherein both theſe Covenants have been again adminiſtred in Spirit, ſuitable to the ſtate of the perſons, whereto they have been adminiſtred. And becauſe of the neceſſity of faith and obedience in the new Covenant (both to the ſeed and to the man) the man is ſo apt to fix his eye and build his hopes upon them (and not upon the free love of him that works them in him) that he is in danger of falling from and diſhonouring the free grace (which is the hope of *Iſrael*) and of loſing his ſtate, which is not ſure (how far ſo ever it be advanced in a preſent power and dominion) further than it is built upon and fixed in the grace. And therefore is this given forth, that the life in *Iſrael* may be ſure and laſting, and that they may grow up perfectly (out of the principle of nature) into the principle of grace, and know the difference between their being united to and living in God, either in the fear, faith or love, ſo far as they can receive or retain them; and God's living in them, and creating continually the fear, faith and love in them, and bringing forth all the fruits thereof in and from himſelf.

For though the Covenants are and have been ſtill the ſame from the beginning, yet the manifeſtations of them have been ſtill greater and greater. And a greater manifeſtation may yet be of the love and life of God (and the ſweet, free nature of his Covenant) than hath hitherto been, or yet is, which *Iſrael* is to wait for and feel the need of, before it be brought forth. And though all thoſe fore-mentioned (to wit, of *fear, faith and love*) are pretious ſtates, which God works his *Iſrael* up to, in and by the Covenant of his grace, according to their ſeveral growths and capacities, yea and according to which the delight and pleaſure of his ſoul is in them: yet the abſolute aſſurance is only in the latter, even where the Creature is ſo gathered into the life of God, that its ſtate depends not at all upon what it ſelf is, or doth, but only upon what God is and will be to is freely of himſelf and for his own names ſake.

This is written in love, for preſervation; and not for diſcouragement or deſtruction: but that that which ſtandeth, may

feel

feel where to fix. For in the highe[illegible]te that man can be advanced to, yet if any of the creaturely principle be left in him unsubdued, and not yet buried with the Seed into its death, there is so far a capacity of falling: and his fall (in case the Lord do suffer his feet to slip) will be the greater, by how much the higher and more exalted he was in the Dominion and presence of the power, and by how much the more it was unexpected by him.

And this my heart hath often said within me, and still saith to a weary soul, which hath felt the touches of life, and desireth everlasting unity with it; yea to all that desire to walk with God, and to abide in the power of his life in any dispensation; *Keep the eye of thy minde to the grace which visits thee: not so much to the light which comes from the grace, as to the grace from which the light comes; and dayly look for help and remission from it, as freely as thou hadst at first. And in all losses, and darknesses, and [illegible]ings up of guilt and condemnation, cast thy self at the foot of it, saying in thy heart, if thou hadst not freely visited me at first, I had not set one step in the path of life; and if thou dost not as freely visit me still, and renew life in me dayly of thine own accord, and from the same love and goodness, I cannot but be lyable to miscarry. O that I might obey every beam of thy light, and every moving of thy life, but I dare not undertake it, O that thou wouldest undertake for me. My righteousness, my obedience, my love to thee, my faith in thee is like the morning due, which soon passeth away, and I cannot finde or come at it again: O raise up life from an everlasting Seed, and gather my heart into it and preserve me in it, not according to what I am or have done, or yet can be or do; but for thine own names sake, and in thy love to thy Seed, and to thy creature in and through thy Seed by the Promise.*

Thus as any grows into the Covenant of grace, through the Covenant of works (which is necessary to be dispensed in some measure, till the mans Nature and Principle be wholly worne out by it) they will finde sure footing there and building upon that, from which the Soul (that cleaveth to it in the vertue and

nature that floweth from it) can never be removed. Yea the peace and ſafty of *Iſrael* in there travels (fixing here) will be greater, and there aſſurance greater, and their falls and the prevailings of the Enemy not ſo dangerous (that being had recourſe to, which never fai'es of healing that ſoul, which lyes at the foot of it and in heart waits its ſeaſon) however they may be hurred and driven about with Tempeſts, through the violence of the Enemy and good pleaſure of him, who ſeeth it fit for the preſent ſtate of the ſoul, to have it thus exerciſed.

The intent of God in the ſalvation of man, is to magnifie the riches of his grace and the freeneſs of his love. And this is effected, as man is broken in his natural principle and power of beleiving and obeying, and a Seed of life freely raiſed up in him, and he freely gathered into it and preſerved in it. And where is the Boaſter here? or where is he, who in this ſtate, can throw a ſtone at another becauſe of his tranſgreſſions? Nay, nay; He that is freely forgiven, and lives meerly and for ever by mercy alone, he is formed and brought forth in the tenderneſs of the bowels which begat and nouriſh him: and he cryeth mightily for the ſpreading of the ſame bowels over other ſinners, waiting for the ſeaſon of their viſitation and gathering into the ſame love, and by the ſame powerful hand, if it may be.

O my God, bring up the power and ſweetneſs of thy life in Iſrael, *and ſhew mercy to all Nations. Purge the Earth with thy fan, ſcatter the corruption there of from the hearts of the ſons of men, and make them the Paradice of thy pleaſure: that thou, O living God, mayſt dwel in and ſhine forth from thy Temple, and it may no longer lye waſt, nor the abomination of deſolation defile it, to the diſhoner of thy name, and to the ruine and miſery of thy Creation.*

Poſtſcript.

Postscript.

Some things are exceeding necessary for lost man to be acquainted with, in his travels from his lost estate, into the life and peace of God. As,

1. *To his lost estate and misery for ever, unless the Lord pitty and help him.*

2. *To know the light, wherewith the Lord visits the souls that sit in darkness, that he may wait for the shinings therof, and in them travel with the leading spirit of life, from the darkness and death of sin, towards the land of the living.*

3. *To breath unto the Lord and wait to have his heart joyned to the light and power of life dayly, and separated from the powers of death and darkness, under which he was and still is a captive, but as the Lord appears for him and delivers him.*

4. *To put forth all the strength of his soul and mind, and all the members of his body in the service of the Lord. For as he is, in any measure, set free by the Lord from the service of sin; So is he to serve and obey the Lord in righteousness.*

5. *To wait dayly to receive the strength from the Lord, wherewith he serveth the Lord. For though by the Redemption of the Lord, he feels the creaturely part (in some measure) renewed and restored, and an ability received to serve righteousness, which before he had not: yet this is not so given to him, as that the Lord hath it not still in his hand who can stop or let it out at his pleasure. And happy is that man, who looketh not upon himself as somewhat, because of what in any kind he hath received, but feeleth his dependance upon the Lord.*

6. *To feel the grace and mercy of the Lord, in whatever he receiveth from the Lord, or whatever he doth for the Lord. It is all of the Lord: happy is the man that sees it. It is the mercy of the Lord that man is not consumed. It is the mercy of the Lord, that any man in any state (or degree of life and redemption) is preserved.* The mercy of the Lord endureth for ever, therefore is Israel

safe

ſafe. *This will be the ſong of praiſe in the houſe of the Lord for ever.*

7. *To wait for the waſting of the man, and the raiſing up of the ſeed day by day: that that to which the Covenant of works is natural, and which cannot but deſire it and ſeek to live by it, may be worn out; and that to which the Covenant of grace is as natural (if not more) and which alone lives by the promiſe, and through the faith and in the grace which freely flows from the eternal fountain, may be raiſed up and ſucceed in the place and ſtead thereof.*

Here is ſafety indeed. Here is everlaſting righteouſneſs ſo brought in, as that it can never be removed out of the heart more. Here everlaſting life and the Soul are one for ever. Here is no more going into captivity, which Iſrael *ſetled in* Canaan, *and enjoying the ſweetneſs and reſt thereof, under the firſt Covenant may. Here are no tears, nor ſighing, nor departing from the face, nor grieving the holy Spirt of the Lord, nor being grieved by it any more: but what the heart deſires of God and what God deſires of the heart mutually received, and the going forth and the coming in and the abiding one and the ſame for ever, the ſame life and power and love and eternal ſweetneſs being all and in all for ever. This is the mark of* Iſrael, *and the haven of its eternal reſt, to which the Lord is leading the* poor, hungary, empty, mourning, afflicted, loſſed *Souls, to whom it is as ſure in the love and good-will of God (and in the counſel of his heart determined thereupon) as if they were already in it.*

5 AP 58

THE END.